



NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES COMMISSION

No. 26, Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama District, F.M.S. 237, Garki, Abuja-Nigeria.

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GUIDELINES FOR THE AWARD AND USE OF HONORARY DOCTORATE DEGREES IN NIGERIA

An honorary doctorate degree is a non-earned doctoral degree awarded *honoris causa* (for the sake of honor) to acknowledge distinguished merit, outstanding public service, scholarly impact, creative achievement, or significant contributions that reflect the values and mission of the awarding institution. In Nigeria, the statutes of Nigerian Universities empower them to award honorary degrees. The Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act, Chapter E3, Laws of the Federation of Nigeria, 2004, also empowers the National Universities Commission to lay down minimum standards for all universities and other institutions of higher learning in the Federation and the accreditation of their degrees and other academic awards.

In developing these guidelines, due regard has been given to established academic traditions governing the award of honorary degrees in Nigeria, including the resolutions of the Association of the Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (AVCNU) as articulated in the Keffi Declaration (2012). In addition, comments and inputs from the Nigerian universities submitted to the Commission in December 2025 have been duly considered and incorporated. Accordingly, the NUC has developed the following guidelines which are intended to provide informed policy direction, strengthen institutional practices, and promote a more transparent and accountable system for the award and use of honorary doctorate degrees in Nigeria:

S/N	Key Component	Guideline
1	Institutional Eligibility:	Only approved universities (either public or private) are eligible to award honorary doctorate degrees in Nigeria.
2	Maturity:	Only universities that have graduated the first set of PhD students are eligible to award honorary doctorate degrees in Nigeria.
3	Purpose of the award:	The purpose of the award shall be to recognize exceptional and sustained contribution, reflect institutional values, and ensure diversity.
4	Criteria for the award:	The criteria for the award shall be clear and transparent with balanced representation across gender, race, nationality, and discipline to avoid conflicts of interest. All procedures for selecting and awarding honorary doctorate degrees shall be clearly stated on the official website of the awarding institution and made accessible.
5	Recipient Eligibility:	Self-nominated candidates and elected or appointed serving public officials are excluded.
6	Confidentiality:	All aspects of the honorary doctorate degrees shall be treated with the highest level of confidentiality, and nominees shall only be contacted after their nominations have been approved by the Senate and Governing Council.
7	Award nomination:	All nominations shall be processed by the statutory committee.
8	Approval:	All nominations require University Senate and Governing Council approval.
9	Number of awards:	The number of awards at each convocation shall not exceed three (3).
10	Nomenclature and title of the award:	All honorary doctorate degrees shall contain the nomenclature or title <i>Honoris Causa</i> . For example: Doctor of Science (<i>Honoris Causa</i>), D.Sc. (h.c.)
11	Conferral:	Shall be in-person at the ceremony. In exceptional cases, the conferral may be done virtually or in absentia; it may be awarded posthumously.
12	Fee:	Honorary doctorate degrees shall be conferred without any fee or expectation of payment from the recipients.
13	Usage:	The recipients are at liberty to use the approved nomenclature or title of the honorary doctorate degree such as Doctor of Law (<i>Honoris Causa</i>) or LL.D. (h.c.), Doctor of Letters (<i>Honoris Causa</i>) or D.Litt. (h.c.) after their names. However, they are not permitted to use "Dr.", which is reserved for holders of earned degrees and medical professionals. Additionally, they are not permitted to use the honorary doctorate degree to practice as scholars or professionals, oversee administrative units, or supervise research work.
14	Orientation to recipients:	All awarding universities shall provide both written and verbal orientation to recipients on how to use the award.
15	Record of recipients:	All universities shall regularly publish names of honorary doctorate degree recipients on their official website and make it accessible to the public, in order to uphold transparency.
16	Revocation policy:	All awarding universities shall provide a formal mechanism to rescind awards if a recipient is convicted of fraud, or has engaged in any unethical conduct that is inconsistent with the values of the awarding institution.

Consequently, all universities eligible to award Honorary Doctorate Degrees in Nigeria are required to strictly comply with NUC-approved Guidelines.

It is pertinent to state that appropriate regulatory sanctions shall be applied to any institution that confers these Honorary Doctorate Degrees in Nigeria in violation of the prescribed Guidelines.

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